

Xian Gu

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PROFILE

Senior user experience researcher with 8+ years of applied experience working with industry-leading, innovative technologies, both software and hardware. **Mixed methods** approach (qualitative with some quantitative methodologies) stems from a background in human-computer interaction and psychology. Proactively and independently plans and executes **end to end research**, from choosing methodology to sharing insights and **guiding product development, collaborating with stakeholders** throughout (UX designers, product managers, and engineering, others as needed). Experience with managing vendors and freelancers, mentoring junior researchers, and UX education and advocacy. Past two years add pioneering **AI boosted methods** and experimenting with AI tools for research productivity.

CORE COMPETENCIES

UX research: interviewing, ethnographic study, contextual inquiry, focus groups, diary studies, surveys, card sorting, eye tracking, comparative/competitive analysis, heuristic evaluation, cognitive walkthroughs, concept testing, usability testing, benchmarking, A/B testing, tree testing, RITE testing, tree testing, participatory design, literature review, meta-analysis, RITE, Tenets & traps, product reaction cards, System Usability Scale, HEART framework, analyzing customer feedback, data analysis, data visualization; planning, recruiting, moderating, analyzing, synthesizing, communicating, documenting, teaching UXR

UX process: affinity mapping, feature prioritization, user archetypes, personas, segmenting, journey mapping, task/user flows, sitemaps, wireframing, prototyping; hypothesis-driven framework, Jobs to be Done, Moneyball, business model canvas, scrum, agile, lean, sprint and project planning, iterative UX

Tools: UserTesting/UserZoom, Optimal Workshop, Qualtrics, Mural, Miro, Respondent, User Interviews, DScout, Dovetail, Lookback, NotebookLM, Outset; Figma

WORK EXPERIENCE

Senior UX Researcher, Meta, Seattle

May 2025–Mar 2026

Spun up a research practice in a new technical domain: internal code configuration products and safe code change processes for developers, addressing unmet technical needs and business risks

Balanced traditional research planning and implementation/advocacy in partnership with cross functional network with AI-assisted script writing, session summarizing, quote finding, sentiment analysis, and insights formatting, and further experiments in AI moderation, data pulling, dashboard creation, quantitative triangulation

Established near and far term roadmaps for future UXR and joint studies, and templates for stakeholder collaboration. Foundational studies formed the basis for a new ground-level understanding specific to a burgeoning technical area, while tactical studies unblocked heritage design uncertainties, answered stakeholder questions, and drove planning for user-friendly platform unification

Senior UX Researcher, Salesforce (contract), Seattle

Feb 2025–May 2025

Led UX journey mapping and comparative review across Salesforce native data products and newly acquired OWN data security products through cross-platform Jobs to be Done (JTBD) writing for main user roles at multiple altitudes, including a first stage research literature review and drafting jobs, second stage stakeholder interviews and jobs editing, planning a third stage quantitative survey and further editing, and setting up for a fourth stage implementation and sharing

Creating durable, user- and goal-oriented JTBD across the entire suite of OWN data security and Salesforce native data products fostered understanding overlaps, gaps, and misalignments across OWN and Salesforce products, informed how to fill gaps and reduce redundancies, streamline and package products as a single platform, overall seamlessly bringing the OWN acquisition into Salesforce

UX Researcher II, Microsoft, greater Seattle Feb 2022–May 2024

Created and drove research program for key verticals in Azure AI Platform Machine Learning and Cognitive Services across full product lifecycle using mixed methodologies, partnering with product teams and cross-platform researchers and working with self-recruited developers and technical users, establishing the broad direction of designs with accessibility and tracking incremental changes, using agile and innovative reporting

UX Researcher II (contract), Facebook Reality Labs, Seattle Mar 2021–Jan 2022

User-centered human factors and anthropomorphic mixed-methods research, remote and in-lab, for confidential novel hardware AR form factors in early development; stakeholder relationship-building and research delivery/discussions; vendor researcher management; secondary data analysis and desk research

UX Researcher (contract), Microsoft, greater Seattle Jun 2019–Jan 2021

Generative problem-finding and evaluative problem-solving research partnering with dozens of product teams for a leading cloud-based AI machine learning platform across all lifecycle stages; study presentations and publications; UX advocacy and stakeholder education/coaching; honing internal team UXR processes

Lead UX Research Consultant (capstone), UCI and Technolutions, remote Mar 2020–Sept 2020

Research strategy and implementation leading a 5-person team for a customized university admissions portal and underlying vendor technology; planning short- and long-term roadmap of changes for developer team

Data Collection Researcher II (contract), Amazon, Seattle, Feb 2019–Jun 2019

UX Researcher, A+E Networks, NYC, Jun 2018–Dec 2018

Co-founder and UX Lead, LocalVote, NYC, May 2018–Nov 2018

UX Researcher/Designer, Young Audiences New York, NYC, Mar 2018–Apr 2018

EDUCATION

Master of Human-Computer Interaction and Design, University of California, Irvine

Focus in user research and usability; low-residency program

User Experience Research and Design Specialization Certificate, University of Michigan

HCI for User Experience Design Certificate, Massachusetts Institute of Technology CSAIL

Post-Graduate Research Fellowship, École Normale Supérieure de Lyon

Bachelor of Arts, Kalamazoo College

Double major; graduated cum laude; senior thesis honors; Dean's List; merit scholarships

PORTFOLIO

solveforux.design

NB: select non-NDA projects in portfolio only (others available for viewing in small group settings)